



## STATE & PRIVATE FORESTRY FOREST HEALTH PROTECTION SOUTH SIERRA SHARED SERVICE AREA



Report SSSA 11-07

Date: April 29, 2011  
File No. 3420

**PURPOSE:** Firewood/Invasive Pest Risk Evaluation: Lake Isabella Fishing Derby,  
Kernville Ranger District, Sequoia National Forest.

DATE OF TRAVEL: April 14-15, 2011.

FHP PERSONNEL: B. Bulaon & M. MacKenzie

**SUMMARY:** A casual walk along the shore of Lake Isabella and glance through a few California Campfire Permit books indicated that most people attending the Lake Isabella Fishing Derby came from within 20 miles of the lake. Only somewhere between 2 and 2.5% of the families requesting campfire permits came specifically from San Diego County – the county with confirmed Golden Spotted Oak Borer infestations. The attached photo essay was created to put that 2% in perspective.

**BACKGROUND:** Lake Isabella Fishing Derby is a popular event touted to have over 500 people from all over the state in attendance swarming to Lake Isabella within the Kernville Ranger District, Sequoia National Forest. This annual event is held within the town of Lake Isabella, but hopeful fishers line along the entire lake shore, all trying for the \$10,000 grand prize. Some camp in designated campgrounds, but most appear to drive directly up to the lake shore and camp. Many visitors bring firewood, either from their own backyards or purchase firewood from local sources. District personnel noticed that half of the visitors for this derby were habitually from cities in southern California. With the recent discovery of Golden Spotted Oak Borer (GSOB) in San Diego County, there was the high potential of southern California visitors to unknowingly bring GSOB to Kern County through infested firewood.

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**Figure 1. South shore of Lake Isabella.**

Look at the congested line of camping trailers along the shore. At the furthest end of that line up is out of view, but magnified below.



**Figure 2. Close-up view of campers along the shore of Lake Isabella.**

Notice the pile of firewood by the final camper ? Piles of firewood of that size were very common. See Figure 3 below.

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**Figure 3. Close-up of wood and other items brought in by visitors.**

Old pallets as well were brought as firewood. Notice trailer hitch just to right of image. These piles of wood were very close to the trailers. That fire would blister the paint on the trailer.

But wait, there's more!



**Figure 4. Unidentified wood brought in as firewood. Visitor claimed wood was local.**

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**Figure 5. Trailer of wood. Just what's behind the "blue door"?**

A lot of "firewood" is brought into Lake Isabella for this one weekend of a fishing contest. District personnel testify Memorial Day brings in even more visitors (and wood). As Beverly and I walked the beach, we engaged the public in conversation about firewood. In truth, they were eager to talk to Forest Service employees that stopped to pat dogs. Examination of the first two images will show most of those trees in the background are GSOB host oak species.

While visiting the Forest Service district offices at either end of the lake, FHP "Don't Move Firewood" posters were prominently displayed and the other posters FHP brought in were eagerly accepted by the staff. I wish I had some GSOB cards on the same format as the Emerald Ash Borer card from the east. For if I had, I could have distributed dozens of cards to a public that was eager to hear the firewood message. We suspect and were told that most of the largest piles of firewood were of local origin. But as the California Department of Food and Agriculture inspection station folks have told us a 40 ft recreational vehicle can vector a lot of firewood. As the California Campfire Permit system run by USFS, CALFIRE & the BLM records zip codes of folks who wish to light a campfire. This source of information will give us an idea of where campers are originating from.

We have informed district personnel about risk of firewood movement as vectors of pests. As the firewood message resonates with them, we expect to be able to generate more solid data. Next year, we have to be at the lake at the height of the flight period of the insect and hope it does not rain. One wet weekend, the public is likely to abandon their unused firewood and go home leaving GSOB behind. While it might seem like a low probability, during the two weeks of the Fishing Derby 2% of visitors originate from San Diego County are lighting campfires within Sequoia National Forest and putting oak hosts at risk.

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